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CHILDREN INSTEAD OF FATHERS:

A CHRISTMAS

ORDINATION SERMON.



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A CHRISTMAS

Ordination Sermon,

PREACHED AT

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, RED RIVER,

On Sunday, December 25, 1853.

BY

DAVID ANDERSON, D.D.,

LORD BISHOP OF RUPERT'S LAND.

LONDON:
THOMAS HATCHARD, 187, PICCADILLY,
1854.

LONDON:
G. J. PATMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

TO HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

MY DEAR LORD ARCHBISHOP,

INDEBTED to your Grace's good opinion for the position which I hold, I am anxious at once to express my deep sense of personal obligation, and also to give the fullest information of the growth of our Church in this remote diocese. There are, indeed, few duties which I am called upon to perform in which I am not in some way reminded of your Grace. In ordaining, I cannot but think of the seasons at which I was myself ordained deacon and priest by your Grace, and of the paternal counsel which, along with many others, I received on those occasions. In preparing my Triennial Charge I as

naturally revert to those well-weighed words of wisdom to which I was accustomed to listen when one of your Grace's clergy in the diocese of Chester. And in reviewing my present responsibilities, I often endeavour to realise the solemn scene when, in the Cathedral Church of Canterbury, I was consecrated by your Grace for the distant West, and a beloved brother sent forth at the same time to the farthest East.

In the composition of this Sermon, I have availed myself of your Grace's words, written and delivered many years ago, before your elevation to that Bench of which for nearly thirty years you have been so bright an ornament. I met with them for the first time when visiting our most solitary station in the north last summer, and they have dwelt upon my mind ever since. They were heard with delight by all when quoted, and especially by those engaged in the work of the ministry, who could best feel their truth and beauty.

The Sermon possesses nothing in itself to re-

commend it ; the circumstances and associations of the moment gave it an interest, and led perhaps to the request from many that it should be published. Such as it is, I humbly present it to your Grace, in token of personal gratitude and unfeigned esteem. That God may long preserve a life so valuable to the Church of Christ, that He may yet enable you to plant many more churches in the remotest dependencies of Britain, and that children instead of fathers may be raised up in each and all of them, is the earnest and heart-felt prayer of

Your Grace's devoted and humble servant,

DAVID RUPERT'S LAND.

St. John's, Red River,
January 2, 1854.

Hunc Psalmum sicut vobiscum cum exultatione cantavimus,
ita vobiscum cum adtensione consideretis peto. Cantatur
enim de sanctis nuptiis, de sposo et sponsa, de rege et plebe,
de Salvatore et de his qui salvandi sunt.

S. AUGUSTIN. in Psalm. Sermo ad Pleb. Carthag.

A SERMON.

"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth."—Ps. xlv. 16.

THE wise men of the East brought, we are informed, their choicest offerings to the infant Saviour soon after His birth, their gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. We, too, on this joyful morning, would seek to bring our gifts, yet not any offering of earthly treasure, but that which is richer by far, to use the words of India's apostolic prelate,* "the heart's adoration." In order, however, that this adoration may not pass away in mere feeling and excitement, it must be fed and cherished by something which may sustain the flame. This, then, our Church would do, not by any appeal to the senses, not by the exhibition to

* Bishop Heber, Hymn for the Epiphany.

the eye of the great "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," but by the presentation of truth to the mind, combining those heavenly rays scattered over the volume of God, so that they may all unite in reflecting the glory of the Saviour.

Now, if ever our Church seemed guided by the Spirit of God, in making choice of portions of His blessed word, adapted to any of our greater festivals, this special wisdom can be traced in the selection for this day. I hope it has produced its effect upon some of us, while the ~~passages~~ fell upon the ear, and, familiar as they have been to us from childhood, I hope they appeared as sweet, as cheering and heavenly as ever before. And yet, to glance at them again may not be without use, to keep alive the flame, and to make it burn more intensely where it already exists; and in the case of others to lead them to feel that God, even His glory, was in the midst of them, and they knew it not.

To take the selection of the Psalms,* that manual of devotion of the saints of old and the saints under the Gospel; in the first, we have the Sun of righteousness, glorious in His works and outward manifestation, yet more glorious as there described in His word. In the second, we have the warrior King, the mighty Conqueror; and,

* Ps. xix., xlvi., lxxxv.

changing the picture, we have the Bridegroom and the Bride, and in the text the fruit of the royal nuptials, the holy seed raised up in every land. In the third, we have God returning to Jerusalem with mercy, a hymn which we now take up and use with joy, and in which, at a future day, when the veil is taken from his eye, the Jew may unite with us, and cry, "Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land; thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin." It is thus prophetic of the union of Jew and Gentile, when they shall sing with one heart and voice, in one fold, under one Shepherd.

The appointed Lessons * would carry us from David's longing anticipations, when "the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and His word was in his tongue," to the strains of the evangelical prophet. Seven hundred years beforehand Isaiah beholds in prophetic vision the dawn of the light; he sees it arise on the people walking in darkness, and dwelling in the land of the shadow of death. He seems almost to approach the cradle, and to gaze upon the babe, and to hail Him as Judah's long expected hope, as he bursts out, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," and then he would crown Him with many crowns,

* Is. ix. to v. 8; St. Luke ii. to v. 15.

and spread over Him names of dignity and honour, rising one above the other, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Such is the sublime attestation of the prophet, claiming for the babe, born for us in the lowly manger, wisdom, and power, and deity, and a reign of peace. The second Lesson takes us to the very scene, marks out the events in the history of the world which carried Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and places us by the manger, that our eyes may behold the holy child as an infant of days. But while we gaze, with rapid transition it introduces us to the angelic choir, the heavens are opened over the heads of the watching shepherds, and something of the excellent glory shines round about them, and first it may be Gabriel, who declared beforehand the times to Daniel, and who had appeared to Zacharias when ministering in his course in the temple, and again to Mary herself; he, we may imagine, is selected to make also to them the glad announcement, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." And then suddenly he is joined by a multitude of the heavenly host, and all together raise over Bethlehem's plains the anthem, the echo of which has not yet died away, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

And now, brethren, all might seem to be over, but not the least important, not the least beautiful and impressive portion, still remains—a portion which from the Ordination we lose to-day, but without which our sketch would be incomplete. In the Epistle* we have the sublime march of prophecy, treading as it were on the high places of the earth; we have the long period of expectation, the many varied voices, the lengthened note of preparation, and then the one voice as of the well-beloved.† In solemnity few passages of Scripture surpass it.

“God who at sundry times and in divers manners

spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son,” and the very word suggests other glorious attributes, that if Son, He is also the Heir, the Creator and Preserver of all things, the Brightness of the Father’s glory, and the express Image of His person, the object of worship on earth, and among the angels of heaven. And in the Gospel one passes yet higher still, and beholds the Saviour before prophecy had uttered a voice, before the earth or the world was. The eagle-eyed Apostle

* The Epistle, Heb. i. 1—12. The Gospel, St. John i. 1—14.

† See Davison on Prophecy, and the remarkable saying of Bossuet, “Dieu donna à la majesté de son Fils, de faire taire les prophètes durant tout ce temps, pour tenir son peuple en attente de celui, qui devait être l’accomplissement de tous leurs oracles.”—*Histoire Universelle*.

takes us into the past eternity, to view Him who is from everlasting to everlasting. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and then tracing Him downwards we see Him as Life, as Light, as the Light shining in darkness, yet shining full of comfort on some hearts, those who can say, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Such, my beloved brethren, is the light which our Church casts around the infant Saviour, a light brighter far than any earthly glare or splendour, the light of the Spirit which shines inward,* and which will ever carry us the nearest to Him, who dwells in the light which no man can approach unto. Reflect, then, on these united passages, and do not dismiss them from your minds; carry them with you to that feast of love to which you are invited, and so shall your eyes behold something of the King in His beauty.

From the whole, we have selected the verse of the text, as that one which may perhaps best combine our double subject, uniting that of the Ordination with the glad tidings of the day. As it is not often that this festival falls on a Sunday,

* Milton's prayer :—

" So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward," &c

we thought it the more likely to render it a day of joyful remembrance throughout our lives, to make it also our day of Ordination, delaying the latter a week beyond the usual and prescribed time. And we have, for the same reason, invited those of other congregations to join us, and would only pray that the Holy Spirit might be present in the abundance of His gifts; that He might be imparted in His fulness to those on whom are about to be laid a weightier responsibility and trust; yea, that He might be graciously given to all, and so reveal to us the Saviour that we may discern Him in His birth,* discern Him in His word, discern Him at His table, and may feel our hearts burn within us while He talks with us in our pilgrimage, and opens to us the Scriptures.

Now the words of the text predict clearly a mighty spread of the Gospel, a great addition to the number of God's people. They are addressed to the Bride, who is to forget her own people, and her father's house, and to be joined in everlasting espousals to the heavenly Bridegroom. The progeny, it is declared, will be far more numerous than the long line of ancestors in which she gloried, "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands."

* See the beautiful passage of St. Augustine, "Pulcher Deus, Verbum apud Deum . . . pulcher natus infans Verbum . . . pulcher in sepulcro, pulcher in cælo."

The call, then, of the Gentile Church, its difference from the Jewish in extent and universality seems here to be plainly prefigured. Very limited was the Jewish Church even in its widest influence. In Egypt the children of Israel may have left behind some traces of the knowledge of the true God. In Arabia some light may have lingered, some seeds of promise may have been scattered over the land, and the hope of a bright Morning Star may thus have been kept alive. In Babylon and the surrounding region prophecy may have exerted some power, and those of the captivity who never returned may have treasured up some recollection of the appointed weeks. At Rome, too, and other large cities, to prepare the way of the Lord, there were at the period of the Advent Jews carried abroad by the spirit of gain and adventure. But still the people were solitary: "they dwelt alone, and were not numbered among the nations." How different the prospect unfolded in the words before us, which declare that her children shall reign in all lands! There is no limit in them, nor is there in the announcement of the angel, when he brings the good tidings of great joy, and speaks of them as extending to all people. And with this had agreed the whole tenor of prophetic song. More, Isaiah had said, were to be "the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife;" more than

"the dew from the womb of the morning will be the dew of thy progeny,"* had been the words of David in a Psalm which the Saviour applies to Himself; that is, "Thy children, begotten to thee through the Gospel, shall exceed in number, as well as brightness and beauty, the spangles of early dew."† Nor is it a little remarkable that the two fullest prophetic descriptions of the cross, and the agonies of the suffering Saviour, include also the vision of the Redeemer's countless progeny. The prospect is seen in the distance, relieving the sorrowful picture of one Psalm, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee;—a seed shall serve Him." And in Isaiah, in almost similar words, "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." Thus were the heathen to be the inheritance of the Redeemer, when exalted to the right hand of power on the holy hill of Zion, and "the uttermost parts of the earth were to be His possession."

Hath not God, then, fulfilled His promise, "Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children, princes in all lands?" Was it not so in the early Church? Was not Peter, the Apostle of the Cir-

* Bishop Lowth's translation.

† Bishop Horne on Psalm cx.

cumcision, a Jew? was not Paul a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and brought up after the straitest sect of his religion? was not John living and worshipping as a Jew until called by the Redeemer to forsake all and follow Him? But the time had arrived when the things which had been gain to them, those they counted loss for Christ. The Jewish ancestry was to be forgotten, the long line of patriarchs and prophets was to merge in the brighter line of Apostles and Martyrs,* who carried the truth abroad, and watered the seed often with their blood.

So far had it spread even in the lifetime of St. Paul (and how much farther before the death of St. John?) that we find him dwelling on Old Testament prophecy, and so interpreting it, and pointing out its fulfilment to the darkened eyes of his countrymen. He quotes Hosea as unfolding this purpose of God, "I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved, and in the place where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, there shall ye be called the children of the living God." He then enters upon the subject, and comments

* This is well expressed in Merrick's poetical version:—

"No more the patriarchs of thy line
In time's long records chief shall shine;
Thy greater sons, to empire born,
Its future annals shall adorn."

upon it at greater length, and claims for the Gentile a portion in the paternal love and mercy of God, which the Jew would restrict to himself, "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him, for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Anticipating every possible objection, he himself proposes the question, "Have they not heard?" to which his immediate reply is, "Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Such, then, was the spread of the Gospel even in Apostolic times. They could thank God who "always caused them to triumph in Christ, and made manifest the savour of his knowledge by them in every place." A seed was raised up from the very bosom of the Jewish Church to propagate salvation to the limits of the then known world.

But, brethren, advance a step, and the founders of the early Church are taken away. As wise master builders they had laid the foundation, some of them cut down, like the first martyr Stephen, by a premature and cruel death; some spared for a longer season, like Paul the aged, and passing through many vicissitudes in many lands; a few, like John, tarrying on earth to more than the usual limit of man's existence, and perhaps ending life in calmness and an atmosphere of holy love. But, having served their day and generation, they

one after another fell asleep, and of them the next race might say, as they gazed upon their empty seats, "Our fathers where are they, and the prophets do they live for ever?" They were removed from the scene of their earthly labours, but in their stead were raised up others to be made princes in all lands. There was one, who as a son with a father had laboured with Paul in the Gospel, and when the great Apostle had finished his course, his own son in the faith was ready to continue the work, and hand down the light. And long after St. John was taken away, the recollection of his words and lessons was treasured up, and was fruitful among the nations. "I can describe," says one, "the very spot in which Polycarp sat and expounded, and his going out and coming in, and the very manner of his life, and the figure of his body, and the sermons which he preached to the multitude, and how he related to us his converse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, how he mentioned their particular expressions, and what things he had heard from them of the Lord, and of his miracles and of his doctrine."* Thus writes Irenæus regarding St. John and Polycarp, delighting to treasure up the past in his memory, and to live his youth over again, for, according to his own beautiful expression, "The instructions

* Iren. Epist. ad. Florin., quoted by Milner.

of our childhood grow with our growth, and adhere to us most closely." And where was he proclaiming the tidings of the Gospel? Not, brethren, at Ephesus, or Smyrna, or any of the favoured seats of civilization, but in Gaul. History tells us that "though versed in Grecian literature, he acquired the ruder dialect of Gaul, conformed himself to the rustic manners of an illiterate people, renounced the politeness and elegance of his own country for the love of souls." Such were his labours in life, until after many tortures, he sealed his testimony to the truth by a cruel martyrdom, when the streets of Lyons flowed with blood. And as in Gaul and at Lyons, so among the other nations God carried on His own work, raising up instruments and fitting them for His service. Instead of the early founders a spiritual progeny was raised up to occupy their places, and to extend the boundaries of the Redeemer's kingdom. Nor was this done alone by those who were called to the public ministry: many were those who in private life helped in the Gospel, many who became fellow-workers in the blessed cause. The various providences of God scattered the seed—persecution carried it to fresh regions, and the tide of war and the captive slave became at times the heralds of the Cross. And at last kings were the nursing fathers and queens the nursing mothers of the Church. The counte-

nance of the world was extended to the professors of the Gospel, and although grace might not always touch the heart, yet outward homage and respect were paid to the Christian name. The spiritual seed was multiplied, and believers became centres of light.

Age after age, however, rolled on ; some centuries of darkness intervened, during which little was done for the extension of the kingdom, and Christians regarded but little the stewardship committed to them. And even, after the world awoke from its long sleep, when God unlocked His word, and opened to the view also a new hemisphere, still the efforts were only scanty which were made for other lands. There is something very solemn in the succession of generations, earth changing her tenants, at least those who are occupied in the busy scene, one generation coming and another going, yet the earth abiding the same. And as the earth continues, so does the Church of the living God ; in the darkest ages He has some who do not bow the knee to Baal, even under the veil of a corrupt system, He has still some who rise above it and serve Him acceptably, and He ever knoweth them that are His. But there are special seasons when His arm seems bared, and His own finger appears to lead His people on to fresh triumphs. Such, few would doubt, was the case at the Reformation, but while at that time the

Church was purified, there was no mighty and vigorous effort made to carry to the heathen world the message of salvation. Is not, however, the providential preparation plain in the present century? The desire to spread the Gospel is first enkindled by the Spirit at home, and then, as many rise up filled with zeal and love for souls, the kingdoms open, the most distant are brought near, and man is dispersed over the solitary places of the earth. Has not God appeared to give a fresh charge to His people, Go and occupy the nations; or rather, we might say, has He not given fresh energy in the fulfilment of a long neglected duty? Many were sent forth to plant and to spread; some in the ordinary offices of the ministry, as Marsden and Martyn; some in the higher offices of the Church, as Heber, and Wilson, and Selwyn; some labouring successively in each, as the apostolic Stewart of Quebec, the devoted Corrie of Madras, and Gobat, formerly of Abyssinia, now Bishop of Jerusalem; some have died in the field of their labours, offered on the sacrifice and service of the faith, and their bones, like those of Heber, lie in a foreign soil; others, like Broughton, are permitted to return, and lie buried in the very spot where they may have worshipped in childhood.*

* W. Grant Broughton, D.D., Bishop of Sydney, educated

But wherever their ashes may lie, their seed remains: "A nation of Pagans converted to the faith, another Christian people added to the family of God,"* this, the fruit of the labours of Marsden; the living word in another tongue, that the imperishable seed left by Martyn; a native ministry at Calcutta and Madras, here the proof, at the present hour, that Heber and Corrie neither ran nor laboured in vain. The law of the kingdom was still seen to be the same, "Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children." If strong in faith and in reliance on the Divine promises, they forsook their home and earthly kindred, God gave them as their recompense a spiritual seed. "They have found the fulfilment of the paradoxical promise, manifold more in this present time. The delightful intercourse of earthly friends has been denied them, but they have enjoyed the presence of God. He has come unto them, and made His abode with them. They have borne the burden and heat of the day, but they have realised the promise, that as their day was, so should their strength be. In the midst of their usefulness,

at the King's School, Canterbury, died in that city while on a visit home, and was interred in the Cathedral there. See the sermon preached the Sunday after by Archdeacon Harrison, "The Church's sons brought back to Her from far."

* The testimony of Bishop Selwyn on his first arrival in New Zealand.

death has intercepted their labours, but their hope has been full of immortality." * And when themselves called away, they have left behind many children to perpetuate the work, and to spread it even more widely.

View, brethren, the promise in what light you will, turn it in each fresh direction, and cheering and comforting thoughts arise out of it, laws pervading the spiritual household and economy of God, deduced from the nearest and closest relationship of the earthly family. Children instead of fathers; the believing parent, father of believing children. Not that grace is always hereditary, not that the parent can claim it as a right from God, not that we always see the chain unbroken, and yet the fault and sin are certainly with man, for the promise is sure, and the charter runs, "Unto you and unto your children," and if pleaded in strong and earnest faith, God will fulfil it to those who humbly trust in Him. "The children of His servants shall continue, and their seed shall stand fast in His sight." Exceptions to this are noted in Scripture for our warning, and are often quoted by the world for our reproach; the count-

* The words are extracted from a passage, giving a beautiful description of the peculiar trials and consolations of missionary life, in a sermon preached before the Church Missionary Society in 1825, by the Rev. J. B. Sumner, now Archbishop of Canterbury.

less examples of the rule are not written in any earthly record, and will only be fully known by the opening of the Lamb's book of life.

Children instead of fathers—here, too, the law of increase, which would hold in measure in the spiritual as in the natural family of God. Take the believing parent, surrounded with children, growing up in the fear of God, and, in another generation, a second or a third, what a seed would there be to replenish the earth! How many the progeny of Jacob when Israel came out of Egypt! how many they who but for sin and the destroyer might, by a short and easy path, have entered into the land of promise! And if through increase of faith the spiritual seed of believers multiplied as the temporal, how glorious the prospect opened up! How soon would the prophecy become history, and “a little one become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.”

Now views of this description afford us, brethren, humble confidence, and something of a chastened joy, from the recurrence of such seasons as the present. The fathers and founders of our Church are mostly taken from us; one only entitled to the name still remains, and whom that very pre-eminence would mark out as the one best fitted by years and usefulness for the office to which he is to be raised this week.* But their

* The Rev. W. Cockran, now Archdeacon.

children occupy their places; to two of those before me the name applies,—to the one without a figure, to both, I trust, in spiritual meaning. We hope that the day affords some token that the roots of the native Church are deepening in the land. The supply of European labourers must always be fluctuating and uncertain, but should they fail, we look to such as you, my brother,* not to forget your kinsfolk, but to labour for their immortal weal. We want such links between the Indian and ourselves. With the Bible in our hands, and our hearts yearning over their souls, and with the interpreter by our side, we are still powerless, comparatively, to declare the things of our God. The words falter on the lip, the sentences are broken and interrupted. But no such difficulty or backwardness need paralyse your tongue. Trained in our own schools, you are familiar with our thoughts and feelings, and instructed in the compass of Scripture, and familiar, too, with the thoughts and feelings of the Indian, you bring salvation near to him, looking back on the method by which God enlightened your own soul. You can sit in friendly intercourse with them, as I have seen you by the Lake; you can dissipate some of their difficulties, and, in effect, preach Jesus unto them. You can offer up the

* Mr. James Settee, Native Catechist, then to be ordained Deacon.

prayer, as I have often heard you, in words which carry their hearts upward to the throne of God. Our motive in ordaining you would be the felt confidence that you gain influence over the Indian mind, and that you use that influence in endeavouring to lead him to the Saviour. I know that you have sought guidance whence strength alone can come, and that it is in the deep sense of your own insufficiency, "in weakness, and fear, and in much trembling," that you undertake this office; and I would only pray that, while we look to you as our mouth to the Indian, the Most High God may be to you for a mouth and wisdom.

And what a value does the day stamp upon our schools! How little did you imagine when you first trod the opposite creek, that after the lapse of twenty-nine years you would be set apart here to the service of the sanctuary. He who received and welcomed you on arrival, he who placed and taught you in the school, and subsequently baptized you, is long since dead; you are called to honour, but he is not here to know of it,* and, after having laboured for a few short hours in the vineyard, you may meet him above with some saved souls. Of ten baptized with you, when you stood forth to witness a good confession,† only three

* The Rev. D. T. Jones.

† It was then the rule not to baptize any of those taught

survive with yourself. How marvellous will thus be the disclosures of that day, how wonderful the path by which God leads!

And to turn to those to be admitted to the higher orders of the ministry, you too, my brother,* would be a proof of the responsibility connected with the training of the young. Reared in early years in the very school over which God has now placed you, with the recollection that he also who taught you was himself cut down in the vigour of life,† you need no other voice to tell you, that eternity must try our work, and that the best instruction is that which links most closely heavenly wisdom with every branch of earthly knowledge. View, then, those committed to you as children now, but as those who are to be fathers in Israel hereafter, and may many of them be indeed "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified." Some will become teachers, a few, it may be, ministers of God; nearly all will be scattered over this wide land; who can calculate the mighty influence to be exerted by them?

Nor is the link wanting to-day as in our Ordin-

in the school until they could repeat the Catechism, and at least a chapter of Scripture.

* The Rev. Thos. Cockran, B.A., Master of St. John's College School.

† The Rev. J. Macallum.

nation in 1850, to connect us with the sister churches. You, my brother,* left your home and kindred, thinking to labour in Canada in the midst of a crowded population, and with all the comforts of civilized life. When looking to ministerial work there, God called you to depart, and to undertake a toilsome journey, and He has, I hope, cast your lot in the wilderness for good. Your sphere will possess but little of the attractions presented by a favoured congregation at home, but your reward will be as great, may we not say greater, if we preach Christ where He is the most wanted, and build not on another man's foundation. And you will connect us with the mother Church by more than the circumstance of your birth. Your district bears the name of one of her parishes,† into which God would seem to have breathed the spirit of missionary love, and you have the comforting assurance that you have an interest in their prayers, while they so gladly minister to you of their earthly substance.

Having thus noticed the running fulfilment of the words from age to age, and brought them down to our own day, and so near to our own hearts and bosoms, I am anxious that our attention should dwell yet more minutely on the agency by

* The Rev. G. O. Corbett, Colonial Church Society, late of Montreal.

† Headingley, near Leeds.

which God carries on these great designs, and the method in which His counsels are gradually developed.

If it be asked, How is the glorious promise of the text accomplished? We can have no hesitation in saying, chiefly by the word of God. What else would be the weapon of Him who goes forth conquering and to conquer? When it is said in our Psalm, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously," what shall we pronounce the sword to be but that of the Spirit, which is the word of God, the same which is said by the Apostle to be "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword?" What are the arrows which it describes as sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, but arrows of conviction,* drawn at a venture, but taken from the true quiver, and piercing so as to lay bare the thoughts and intents of the heart? And so, too, when in our other Psalm the all-prevailing power of the Sun of righteousness is set forth, when He is described as "rejoicing as a strong man to run a race;"

* In preparing this sermon I had forgotten to turn to the four striking sermons of Bishop Horsley on the Psalm. On referring to them since, I find that the Bishop makes the sword and the arrow emblems of one and the same thing, of the word of God, in its different effects, "the word of terror is the sword girt upon the Messiah's thigh; the word of persuasion is the arrow shot from his bow."

when it is said that "His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and that there is nothing hid from the heat thereof;" of what is it that David would speak? Is not all emblematic of that word of which he subjoins the features and effects, that "law which is perfect, converting the soul, that testimony which is sure, making wise the simple?" Is not that, to use the figure of another of the undoubted Messianic psalms, and another of our Christmas portions,* the rod of Christ's strength which the Lord sends out of Zion, and by which the Redeemer is to rule in the midst of His enemies. The living proof of this we have before our eyes. The nation which most honours the word, God has raised and exalted on high, and made her as queen among the nations. Her language seems destined at this hour to almost an universal sway, and the noblest monument of the language is the translation of God's own word, by which she speaks already to those of almost every country, and kindred, and clime.

Connected, however, with the word, and in subordination to it, we would mention the ministers of God, placing them in the very order which, as we have lately seen, they so beautifully occupy in the Collects for the sacred season through which

* Psalm cx., for Christmas evening.

we have just passed.* For, without limiting and confining the passage, or interpreting the word princes as of ecclesiastical rulers alone, few would deny that the primary application would be to the ministering servants of God. Who are those especially sent forth to bring in the Gentile world, the leaders of the children of God? who are they who receive the charge, as you, my brethren, will this morning, to seek Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad? who are they of whom the Apostle tells us, that the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, but effectual to the pulling down of strongholds? Are they not the ministers of God? Yes, brethren, theirs is, if we view it soberly and calmly, an engine of mighty power; to address the human soul one day in seven, when the mind is solemnised and somewhat withdrawn from the world, on the day which man connects more with heaven than earth, to have the privilege of access, when the heart is the most tender from affliction or bereavement. They are especially as princes in all lands, for what is all the power of this world compared to sway over the soul? what is victory over the hosts of earth compared to victory, through God aiding us, over Satan, when we are enabled to cast him out from one soul which he held in chains? Oh! may we ever use that power for God's glory and seize the golden opportunities

* Second and third Sundays in Advent.

which it places within our reach ; may we use it as faithful stewards, not "as being lords over God's heritage, but as being ensamples to the flock."

By this twofold agency, the word and the ministry, or, in a simpler form, by the ministry of the word, it pleases God to extend the kingdom of grace. The effects and blessed results are churches called out of heathen darkness, and individual souls begotten again unto a lively hope. An allegorical picture of this of exquisite beauty is given us in this Psalm.* The daughter of Tyre approaches with her gift and offering, and in her train there is a band of attendant virgins, all paying honour to the royal Bridegroom. In them we may recognize types and figures of the various Gentile churches, and, as comprised under them, individual souls. The variety of raiment has even been explained to betoken the difference of language and country of the churches, yet though there is variety in outward appearance, there is but one gold, an essential unity of faith and doctrine, a participation of one Spirit.† They are

* Matthew Henry has quaintly but truly said of the Psalm that "it is all over-Gospel."

† As St. Augustine, "Alia lingua Afra, alia Syra, alia Græca, alia Hebræa, alia illa et illa; faciunt istæ linguæ varietatem vestis reginæ hujus. Quælibet sit varietas linguarum, unum aurum prædicatur: non diversum aurum, sed varietas de auro. Varietas in linguis, aurum in sententiis."

the many churches into which the people of God are divided here below, yet together forming the one Church of the Redeemed, the Bride of the Lamb. With gladness and rejoicing they are brought and enter into the King's palace, the temple of the living God, no longer "strangers and foreigners, they are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God," and in this it is seen that children instead of fathers are raised up to the Church. For the words, we doubt not, admit of this meaning in their most extended signification. They would embrace all who are among the Redeemer's true followers, to whom He gives power to become the sons of God, and who are even now called to be kings and priests, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood. They are the true Israel of God, and by the energy of fervent and importunate prayer, as princes (for the word is the same) they have power with God, and do prevail.

The only additional result, which we can mention, is the personal and growing holiness of believers so united to the Saviour. The Psalm speaks much of the adornment of the Lamb's Bride, the beauty of her clothing, the brilliancy and costliness of the apparel in which she is decked. But the Spirit leaves us not in doubt re-

Such a passage comes peculiarly home to our heart, amid the many tongues of this land.

garding the secret meaning. He would teach expressly, that the true ornaments of the believer must be something more precious than gold of Ophir, something hidden from human eye. The King's daughter is described as all glorious within, as well as arrayed in clothing of wrought gold. Here is that inward purity, which the Spirit can alone create, and in which alone He will deign to dwell, and flowing forth from it, as from a pure fountain, there is that outward holiness which shines in the life, and attracts with magnetic power. Or, perhaps, in even closer accordance with the harmony of Scripture, the former would be the work of the Spirit within, restoring the lost image of God; the latter, the raiment of wrought gold, that which the Redeemer offers to the churches, that which He has wrought out by His obedience and righteousness, and in which He will "present His bride unto Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish."

What, then, my beloved brethren, has the subject taught us, as its grand and leading lessons?

The Redeemer's joy, if I mistake not, over the gathering in of the children of God. There is little betokening joy to the Redeemer Himself in the view of Him presented to us this day. The stable and the manger rather tell us of Him who on earth had not where to lay His head, who came

unto His own and His own received Him not, who emptied Himself of His glory, and became instead a man of sorrows. But while we commemorate His birth, and more and more, as each generation rolls on, we are invited to think of those whom He is not ashamed to call brethren, and of the addition to their ranks, until they shall become the mighty multitude that no man can number in the day of His appearing. Now over such the Redeemer rejoices; "He greatly desires their beauty," to use the very words of the Spirit in this Psalm, because they reflect His glory, and will ere long share His throne, and receive from His own hand their crowns. Nor do we find difference and distinction among those whom the King so delighteth to honour; they are all called to sonship here, to be kings and priests unto God. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and liftest up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit thrones of glory." The souls of all are alike precious in the Redeemer's sight, and His joy is in their rescue from eternal death; this one was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found. Some that were first shall be last, and the last first; and some of the children of the wilderness, brought in at the eleventh hour, may sit very near to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

And the subject teaches us also very beautifully the ministerial office and message. What more affecting, and at the same time more elevating, view of our office can be furnished than that it is like that of Eliezer of Damascus of old, to seek a bride for our master, the Lord of heaven and earth? Very touchingly is this brought forward in our own service, where we are enjoined to say to those to be ordained priests, "Have always therefore printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which He bought with His death, and for whom He shed His blood. The church and congregation whom you must serve is His spouse and His body." And, again, as if to impress it more deeply upon all, "Consider, therefore, with yourselves the end of your ministry towards the children of God, towards the spouse and body of Christ." And if this be our office, have we not here our very message also? Oh! what do we long to say to every son and daughter of Adam, every child of sin and sorrow still in darkness—what but this?—"My heart overfloweth (bubbleth up) with a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." What do we covet for you who are to be sent forth, and for ourselves who minister at God's altar, beyond these two things—a heart full

of redeeming love, and a ready tongue to proclaim its preciousness? If ever we want a theme, we have only to recur to this Psalm, and speak yet once again of the things touching the King. Life will have closed upon us, and our tongues have become feeble and powerless, long before we have exhausted our subject, and fully set forth His glory.

And lastly, brethren, we are all taught that the tie which binds the saved soul to the Redeemer is none other than the marriage covenant or bond, to be consummated and completed only in the world beyond the grave. Listen to it, in the words of God by a prophet already quoted, "I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." Our Psalm is but the nuptial hymn celebrating the espousal; a song for the beloved one, or a song of loves, as the title goes; and the Song of Songs, that of Solomon, only carries out the same view in deeper and more mysterious strains.* Listen to it again, in the words of the Redeemer himself on the day of His

* The close resemblance between these two portions of Scripture has been noticed by many. There is, I well remember, a comparison instituted between them, with some beautiful remarks on our Psalm, in Bishop Lowth's *Prælections de Sacra Poesi Heb.*; but unfortunately I have not my copy of that work with me here, and from the circumstances

last visit to His earthly temple, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding." Oh! remember that it is the God of heaven and earth making a marriage for His own dear Son, who left His throne to bleed and die, and can it be that they would not come? When yet pressed farther with the invitation, "All things are ready, come unto the marriage," can they still refuse? Yes; the Redeemer has said it, and our eyes behold it; men make light of it, and go their way. With one consent they begin to make excuse; but heaven shall not want inhabitants, nor the banquet be unfurnished with guests. We go at our Lord's bidding into the highways and byways—into the waste untrodden wilderness, but when we have done all, our encouragement is, "Yet there is room." Yes, there is room in a Saviour's love; there is room in the many mansions of our Father's house; room for the poor outcast Indians scattered over this wide land. There is room for all who may be gathered in by the labours of those now to be sent forth. Oh! pray that a great door and effectual may be opened for each one of them for the proclamation of God's truth!

of the country, I should look for it in vain within many hundred miles in any direction.

